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40th Anniversary Edition

KNOTTING MATTERS

The Magazine of the International Guild of Knot Tyers

INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

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KNOTTING MATTERS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE
INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

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The editors welcome the submission of letters, articles, photographs and sketches for publication. Correspondence may be by e-mail **knottingmatters@igkt.net** but more extensive items, such as articles for publication, as well as any pictures, which should be of good quality, need to be sent as attachments. All submissions must include their author's name and e-mail or postal address.

If events are to be publicised in Knotting Matters, note the months of publication - March, June, September and December. Although the deadline for the next issue is given at the foot of the Contents page, please note that the editors begin putting it together at least three weeks earlier.

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KNOTTING MATTERS

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PLEASE NOTE: LETTERS & ARTICLES FOR THE SEPTEMBER 2021 *KNOTTING MATTERS* MUST BE RECEIVED BY 13th AUGUST

FRONT COVER: UNUSUAL KNOTBOARD AT THE AGM, SEE THE STORY BEHIND IT P4

EDITORIAL

We have annotated the cover of this edition 40th Anniversary. Purists will know that the first edition was published for a membership of 45 in Autumn 1982, but please don't bother to write to tell us. Geoffrey Budworth's editorial in that issue began:

> "Here is the first quarterly newsletter. Preserve it. In years to come it will gain curious appeal to collectors."

It was groundbreaking, and while this one is less iconic, it benefits from the technological revolution which allows us the use of colour.

Except during lockdown, all June editions are produced under some additional time pressure, because it has to wait for the outcome, both official and pictorial accounts of the AGM. It also needs to contain notice of all the autumnal meetings around the world. Look out for Geelong pp5&18, St Petersberg p11, World Knot Tying Day p26 and Turku p36. Hopefully, travel restrictions will not have too much of a negative effect!

Many of you will be aware of the ongoing inconvenience of postal delays deferring your enjoyment of reading *KM*. We are accutely conscious of this and have been in discussion with the printers, the membership secretary and the Trustees in search of a solution. In view of this, we draw your attention to the appeal p4 which applies to ***each and every one of us***. We will keep you informed both of the results of the survey and any action we are able to take.

The first face-to-face AGM since 2019 was also shared by Zoom with members unable to attend, another first for the Guild. An Australian meeting by Zoom (another first) was fixed for 6th June; hopefully more about that in September.

Frank Brown's request for members' photos of their knotwork (p5) reminds us of one of our ongoing concerns, that readers seem to be reluctant to share their opinions and efforts, which is evident in the paucity of letters and articles which are mostly contributed by just a few stalwarts. In our view, it would be a crying shame should the photographic exhibition in Geelong suffer from the same apparent excess of modesty.

There are two Obituaries concerning John Turner, a measureof his stature and importance in the academic and practical worlds of knots and knotting.

If you have the opportunity, Chatham Historic Dockyard is well worth a visit, even from overseas. Who knows if enough visitors asked about the Pawson collection, it might encourage the curators to put more of it on show?

M, G and D

Letter from the President

In May, the IGKT held its 40th Anniversary meeting and AGM at Hallowtree Scout Activity Centre in Ipswich, UK. This was the first major face-to-face meeting for the Guild since 2019. Over 60 members from six countries were able to make the meeting and it was really wonderful to renew friendships with people we haven't seen for a very long time. One of our founder members, Geoffrey Budworth was unable to attend this landmark meeting for health reasons, but made generous donations to the meeting instead, for which we were very grateful.

The award of the President's Cup this year goes to Sheila and David Pearson of Yorkshire, UK, in recognition of their hard work for the Guild. Sheila is currently our Chair of Trustees. For very many years, they have together run the very successful Yorkshire Branch meetings that draw members from far and wide, and represent the IGKT at many public shows. David is well known at meetings for conducting the raffle in stentorian fashion! The raffles are always successful because Sheila is equally renowned, often supported by Pauline Bentley, for charming members into parting with their money for an abundance of tickets.

The members of the *Knotting Matters* editorial board, Maurice McPartlan, David Pepper and Gordon Teenan, have indicated their desire to step down and make way for new blood. The current team has been in place since 2016 and have continued to raise the standards of *Knotting Matters* to what it is today. For all their hard work, I would like to offer them my heartfelt thanks for a job well done. If you would like take on the role as editor or as part of an editorial team, please contact the Executive Committee. As a former *KM* editor, I can tell you now that it is a most satisfying role and one that will put you in touch with many members around the world.

Many of you may be familiar with the event that led to the creation of our Guild. In 1978, *The Times* newspaper ran an article claiming a new knot had been discovered by Dr Edward Hunter, named the 'Hunter's bend'. This led to correspondence between two eminent knot tyers, Geoffrey Budworth and Des Pawson. Had it not been for this dialogue between them, the IGKT might never have come into being. On the Guild's behalf, it gave me great pleasure at this 40th anniversary Knot Tyers Supper to appoint Geoffrey and Des Vice Presidents.

The names of the members who attended the inaugural meeting on board RRS Discovery in April 1982, and two members who, being too far away, were unable to attend, are recorded in the first issue of *Knotting Matters*. Unfortunately, Penny Bodger, who was in Australia at the time was missed from that list of founder members. I was delighted to be able to acknowledge and correct this omission, and to present Penny with an engraved glass plaque.

Next year, the AGM will be held at New Brighton, near Liverpool, UK. I look forward to meeting you there.

Colin Grundy

Cover Story • A knot board with a difference

I had wanted to make a knot board for some years when I found myself with plenty of time on my hands at the start of lockdown in 2020. In a lean-to garden room next to my workshop, where we relax with tea and coffee during the working day, I had a large square empty wall space. My idea was to make all the splices and general knots used during the course of my work as a conservator (mainly of industrial metalwork and ordnance) in a single year prior to Covid-19, and to mount them on a square, sail-shaped background.

All the materials were leftovers from projects with the exception of the four-strand rope sewn around the edge of the sail. This was a trial rope made on a rope jack I had restored for Bridport Museum in 2017. The projects covered included re-roping an ordnance lift at Carlisle Castle, roping-down cannon barrels at various locations, and making a winter cover for 'Roaring Meg', a 17th C Civil War mortar at Goodrich Castle, Herefordshire – all for English Heritage, and hanging a heavy wrought iron mine tub for display at Y Gaer, the Museum in Brecon, Powys.

The arrangement of rope tied with a simple Reef knot to attach the sail to the spar is used on a square-rigged ships, but I had found it in use tying a tapestry to a pole in a country house to enable easier salvage in the event of a fire - this technique has now been replaced with the use of Velcro for quick removal.

Tim Martin, IGKT Trustee

THERE HAVE BEEN UNEXPLAINED DELAYS REPORTED IN RECEIVING *KM* IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE WORLD INCLUDING THE USA, AUSTRALIA AND THE UK. TO ASSIST US IN INVESTIGATING AND IMPROVING THE SITUATION,

PLEASE WILL ALL MEMBERS E-MAIL THE TREASURER WITH THE DATE THIS ISSUE ARRIVES IN THE POST

treasurer@igkt.net

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Maurice,

As you editors were disappointed by the photo scale I used for Europa's article (*KM* 154), I am including a picture of one of my recent works based on the Maori or Polynesian lashing, featuring the *IGKT* card.

The items are of bone rather than jadeite, and represent an adze blade, which signifies power and authority. It is called a *toki,* though if you just type t-o-k-i into Google you get a Japanese whisky.

They will go to my granddaughter in the fullness of time.

Richard Hopkins

Dear Maurice

I would like to advise members that the organisers of the proposed meeting in Geelong in September 2022 are inviting them to submit a photo of their work that could be displayed during that event. A prize is being offered for the best photo as judged by popular vote. The main idea behind the invitation is to demonstrate that we are an international organisation. In addition, those members unable to attend can be represented, in a small way.

Members wishing to submit a photo can do so by sending a JPG or similarly reduced file to me, at frankcbrown237@gmail.com

Frank Brown

Dear Maurice

The item on p12 of *KM* 154 (March 2022) from Nosmo King raises the question whether or not one should correct the blithe ignorance of knots by others. He did the tactful thing. On the other hand, sometimes the nettle must be grasped. For instance, I was told by a US private investigator back in the 1980s that, on starting his evidence in court concerning a Granny knot found and preserved at a scene of crime, he was pre-empted by the judge declaring, "That is a Square [UK: Reef] knot. I know. I was a sailor." Oh, dear!

Geoffrey Budworth

Dear Maurice,

I am lucky enough to have been the recipient of many reviews of my book *The Year of Knots*, but seeing Geoffrey Budworth's review in *KM* 154 made my heart skip a beat, and is hands-down the one I hold in the very highest esteem. I'm honoured and thrilled that Mr Budworth enjoyed it, as I in turn have greatly enjoyed, and learned from, his books. My biggest takeaway from my years owning an independent record shop where we sold quite obscure music, is that there is always a community to be found in the tucked-away small corners of the world where our true passion lies, no matter how esoteric or non-mainstream. Happily, I have found this to be true in my life as a knot-tying artist. I'm very, very grateful to the IGKT for bringing together our community of knot lovers. Thank you.

Windy Chien http://windychien.com

Dear Maurice,

Now for some light entertainment.

The Knife Lanyard knot is most frequently seen in its single-ply configuration.

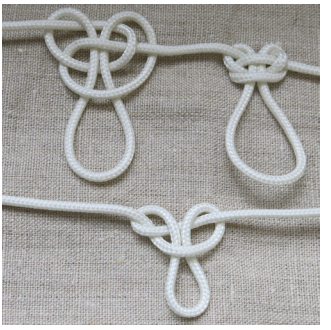
While occasionally doubled, I have never seen a tripled version - so naturally, I had to produce one.

Here it is, and it is truly ugly.

By contrast, there are knots which are for some reason vilified.

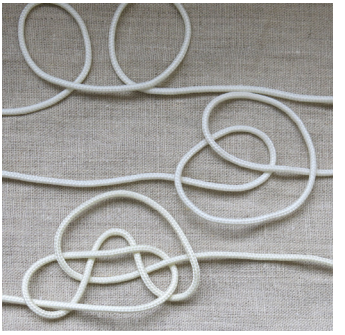
In their magnum opus, Graumont and Hensel show many knots which, they say, have no practical value. One wonders why they are included, but in retrospect it provides the opportunity to examine the validity of their designation.

One such knot is, in my opinion, unfairly maligned as I believe that it has an elegant structure and, furthermore, makes a useful knot. This is the Cask knot (G&H 8/58). The authors show the knot being tied in the end, but as will be shown, this is not the only way.



The photograph shows the open formation of the knot and when it is drawn up. This knot has interesting characteristics. Firstly, it is an elaboration of the Harness loop (*ABOK* #1050) in which the loop parts pass between the standing parts once, whereas in the Cask knot, the loop parts pass between the looped

standing parts four times in an over-and-under fashion. The Harness loop is shown for comparison.



Secondly, the Cask knot may be tied in the bight as is demonstrated in the second photograph. First, tie two opposed hitches in the line, then, turning the hitches towards each other through 90°, lay the right hitch over the left hitch with the parts staggered as shown. Finally, bring the common part up through the hitches in an over and under manner, then draw the knot up with care. The result is a loop knot in the bight, with an attractive structure.

John Heselton

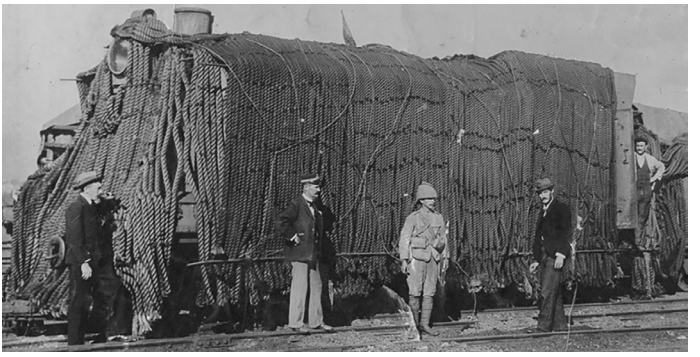
Dear Maurice,

Military blast mats have been mentioned in *KM* recently. This is an allied topic. During the Boer War when the young Winston Churchill was swanning around as a newspaper correspondent, having resigned from the army, he was on a train that was ambushed by the Boers. During the subsequent action he distinguished himself in saving several wounded troops and getting the engine driver, a civilian, to cooperate and move the engine, but was captured and spent time in a prison camp at Pretoria, before escaping.

The railway engine, named Havelock, after a Governor of Natal, was the first 2-8-2 design and also the first to be built in South Africa, although the wheels and axles came from England.

To protect the engine, it was covered in 2,000 fathoms of six-inch rope provided by HMS Terrible. Military humour being what it is, it was quickly named 'Hairy Mary' and the name stuck.

The efficiency of this form of protection may be debated, as after the action it was found that the shells the Boers used still had their fuses set to safe, so did not explode on contact. It would however have been very useful against small arms and as blast protection.



Richard Hopkins

Dear Maurice,

I acquired these three spikes in an online auction, where they were labelled ‘Cumbrian splicing tools.’ Cumbria is a large and predominantly rural English county, so might they have been used in livestock husbandry?

Perhaps a *KM* reader can tell us.

Geoffrey Budworth

Comment by our veterinary editor:
Notwithstanding the bone and horn used in their construction, after a lifetime (thus far) of agricultural experience, I have not come across any instruments of this nature in the livestock field.

Dear Maurice,

A friend of ours is a distinguished sculptor. Alongside his many serious, though often unconventional works are some zany, not to say looney, pieces.

He mentioned backalong that he wanted to modify his antique shotgun by knotting its barrels. Helpfully, I tied him a two-strand Matthew Walker in a length of modern but well-weathered 22mm rope which seemed to be of roughly barrel diameter.

You will see below that he achieved his objective.

He made a silicone mould of the MW, in order to cast the knot in a metal-enriched resin. Having created the time-honoured weapon of the criminal classes, a sawn-off shotgun, he attached the knot before replacing the two cut-off barrels.

It was far too obvious to have them p a r a l l e l, of course. Much better for them to diverge, to be able to kill two birds in different trees without the need to take a second aim.

David Pepper

Knots Made of Air

by Agostino Cortese

2,000 year-old Moku hitching?

While looking around on the internet, I found what I supposed to be the oldest documentation of the kind of knotwork we now call ‘Moku hitching’.

I would like to remind you what French and Moku hitching are, and also what happened at Pompeii (Italy) almost two thousand years ago. In this way you can understand the very peculiar circumstances in which a two thousand year-old piece of ropework survived.

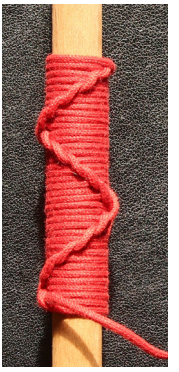
Both French and Moku hitching are particular cases of that technique used for covering a cylindrical object using a series of Half hitches, also known as Ringbolt hitching or Cockscombing.

The purpose of this kind of covering may be keeping the content tightly bound together, protecting it from the surrounding environment or vice versa, creating a good surface for gripping, or providing a decorative effect. Ringbolt hitching is used on tillers, steering wheels, boathook handles, anchor shackles, handrails, hot tubes, ditty bags, strops, ring fenders, etc.

To make French hitching, starting with a Clove Hitch, or better a Constrictor knot, you continue hitching in the same spiral direction (right).

For Moku hitching, take both ends and make alternative Half hitches, with each strand moving in an opposite spiral direction. (left).

The two spirals will eventually cross and will continue to cross periodically as seen from the front (right). From the side (far right) it appears as a zigzag pattern.



The name ‘Moku’ was given by Brion Toss, who first described it in 1981 in an article for *Wooden Boat Magazine* (as noted in Des Pawson’s *Knot Craft and Rope Mats*, where this and two other forms of Ringbolt hitching are better described). Moku is the name of a Sacramento River sugar hauler, (California, USA) where Toss saw it for the first time on the gangplank.

As you probably know, Pompeii was a wealthy, ancient Roman city on the coast near Naples, in South Italy, destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79. It was first covered by a shower of pumice lasting about 18 hours, probably allowing most inhabitants to escape. But the next day, a high speed, dense, and very hot pyroclastic flow spread out, causing instant death by thermal shock, even if people had sheltered inside buildings. The ash filled all the open spaces, leaving the city covered with calcified layers of ash up to 6m (almost 20ft) deep.

Over time, organic material, such as wood, human and animal bodies decayed, leaving voids in the solidified ash. In 1863, archaeologist Giuseppe Fiorelli found that the voids could be used as moulds to make casts with the exact shape of what was originally buried. Since that time, many casts of people, animals and objects have been made.

In November 2021, the Archaeological Park of Pompeii presented the results of new excavations in the villa Civita Giuliana, about 700m northwest of the walls of ancient Pompeii, where a ceremonial chariot and a stable with harnessed horses had been discovered previously. An exceptionally well-preserved room was found – called the Room of the Slaves. It served as the humble lodgings of the staff who carried out the everyday work of the Roman villa, including the maintenance and preparation of the chariot, and it also served as a storage room. Several objects and three beds were found, and a cast of a chariot shaft resting on one of them has been made. That’s where I first thought I had seen a Moku hitching covering (below, details of shaft)

images courtesy of the Archaeological Park of Pompeii - http://pompeiisites.org).

However, considering that even in French hitching one can invert the direction of the spiral, I made another sample reversing the direction after having reached one side of the cylinder (right).

To understand which kind of Ringbolt hitching the Pompeiians used, I then tried to count the round turns and crossings. In French hitching they should be equal, while in Moku hitching the round turns should be twice the number of the crossings visible on one side. And even if the angle of the crossing may vary slightly, depending on how tight the knotwork is tied, I think the difference is big enough to let us distinguish the wider angle of a Moku hitching from the smaller one of alternating French hitching. Meeting both these conditions, I think the shaft is hitched using alternating French hitching.

Further information on the room and two videos of it with details of the shaft can be found starting from the multilingual official website of Pompeii.

SAVE THE DATE

IGKT North American Branch Annual Meeting

St. Petersburg, Florida, USA

October 13 -16, 2022

We are planning for an in-person event with training workshops, knotting displays, dinner ceremony, and activities for travel partners/spouses who are not yet knot tyers. More information will be available as the event approaches.

If you are interested in teaching a workshop or displaying your wares, please contact Therese at tmelbar@cpp.edu or the www.igktna.org website for event postings and registration details as they are made available.

Ropemaking
by Brian Taylor

Since joining the Historical Village & Museum in Hervey bay in 2003, I have become heavily involved in rope making. What started off as the creation of an extra demonstration for visitors has become somewhat of a passion, not only rope making but also knots, particularly Turks Head knots.

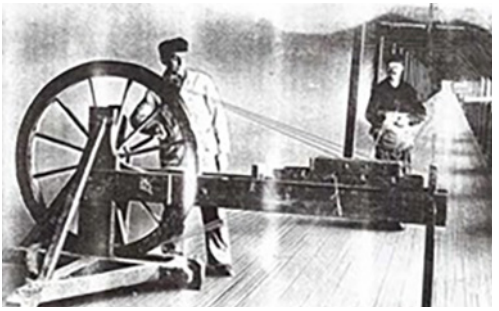
To start at the beginning……rope can be made from any continuous length of material. Plastic, paper, string, etc. If natural fibres are to be the basis, it has to first be harvested from the leaves of various plants. For example *Agave sisalina*

The leaves are cut green and the fibres are extracted by mechanical means. In earlier times, the leaves were hit with metal or wooden bars to crush the outer sheath and eliminate the soft inner sap.

Once cleaned and dried, the fibres are combed out using a hackling board and then gathered into large bundles. The board consists of many spikes or nails and a bundle of fibres is drawn through them as through a comb. The stuff left behind is called 'tow' and is saved for later to make second class ropes called Tow Ropes.

Around the world various methods were used to spin the fibres into yarns (string) usually right hand twisted (Z-laid). The primary qualification for a spinner was to be a good story-teller.

Typically the spinner would place a large bundle of fibres into an apron and pull some out to attach to the rotating hook. He would then walk backwards down the ropewalk drawing out more fibres as he travelled along, sometimes hundreds of feet.

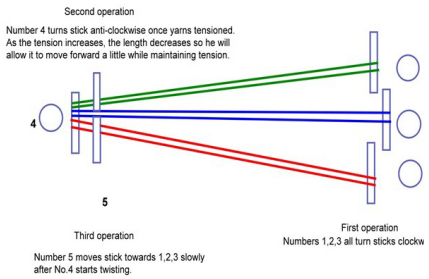


Rope making by hand

Yarns are mostly twisted right hand. Multiple yarns are twisted together in the opposite direction to form a strand (S-laid). Three or four of the strands are then twisted together in the original direction (Z-laid) to produce a rope. If an S-laid rope was needed, three of the Z-laid ropes were used as strands and twisted again in the opposite direction (Cable or S-laid rope). If a 4-strand (shroud-laid) rope was made, it would normally have a core rope introduced during construction to prevent the rope collapsing and to increase its strength.

Using 5 sticks to make rope

It is not hard to imagine early mankind using a method similar to this to make rope. Imagine 3 people on the right, each with a stick around which the yarns are passed.


Second operation
Number 4 turns stick anti-clockwise once yarns tensioned. As the tension increases, the length decreases so he will allow it to move forward a little while maintaining tension.
4
5
Third operation
Number 5 moves stick towards 1,2,3 slowly after No.4 starts twisting.
First operation
Numbers 1,2,3 all turn sticks clockw

On the left, all yarns pass around No4's stick. No5's stick lies between yarns. Nos 1, 2 and 3 all turn their sticks clockwise. Once there is sufficient tension on the strands, No4 turns his stick anti-clockwise and No5 moves his stick to the right, while the other three continue turning. This is an exercise that Scout or School groups could easily do.

Machines make the operation quicker and easier with more consistent results, and it is a fairly simple exercise to make a basic machine.

It is the contra-twisting at each stage which creates a strong mechanical friction bond between the fibres. This method of twisting yarns together in opposite directions to make rope has been used by mankind for thousands of years. It is only during the last century, with the introduction of man-made fibres and the evolution of braiding, that the original process has fallen away. It must have been pretty good to last all that time.

One major change that occurred in the late 1700s was to twist the strands separately and then twist them into a rope. Doing this made sure that all yarns were equally tensioned and laid better, which resulted in a much stronger rope. This involved a register which collected all the yarns together to form a strand which was stronger than the original method. For this, the register starts at the hook machine end and travels away from it, collecting all the yarns together as it is moves along.

When it comes to actually making a rope there are various things to consider. The number of yarns per strand determines final rope thickness. The material used determines strength and flexibility. The tightness of the laid rope also has a bearing on flexibility, strength and water resistance.

At times you say things which with hindsight maybe you should not have. I once said to a group that rope can be made from ‘any’ continuous material, plastic, cloth, string, cotton etc. As a result we were challenged to make a rope from toilet paper (being a continuous material). This took five attempts with several weight reductions. We eventually made a rope but it had no practical purpose. Just a challenge accepted and completed.

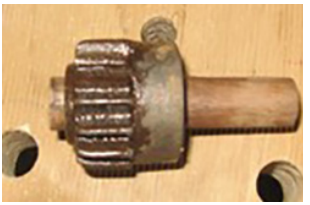
This bit of research led me to deciding to make my own 4-hook ropemaking machine. I have a thing about turning handles clockwise (like the New Era Machine) so was looking for a wheel with an internal gear.

At our Historical Village, we seldom throw stuff away and I found two identical old Qualcast push mowers with steel wheels which had internal gearing.

I only needed one wheel but four pinions hence the need for two mowers.

With everything stripped down and cleaned, the next task was to mount the pinions onto a suitable solid block of timber in the correct position to allow them to mesh with the wheel. I cut off the surplus wheel rim.

I turned timber shafts from hardwood to mount the pinions as well as a wooden sleeve to mount the wheel as the internal diameter of the wheel-hole was quite large. The timber pins allowed me to screw the hooks into the end.



There was a plan in mind to reproduce everything in metal but it works so well I may well leave it as is. Despite careful measurement I had to make three attempts to get the meshing correct. You can see other trial holes in the board. I made a strap to mount on the outside of the wheel and turned a handle to drive it. I then had to make a top to go with the machine so made a tapered one on the lathe and routed out the four grooves.

The first live trial took place in the carport using a suitably weighted washing-basket trolley at the swivel end. I got my partner Anne to turn the handle while I controlled the top. The biggest problem we had was the sisal baling twine kept grabbing an adjacent yarn while twisting so it was a case of stop, untwist and go again. The resultant 3m of 4-strand rope worked out well. Obviously for future use we will have T-bar separators to keep the strands apart while twisting. Either that or a few extra hands.

Easy Star Knot Grommets

by Geoffrey Budworth

This wooden plate (right), which is 30cm (1ft) in diameter, was given to me by the late Stuart Grainger sometime in 1987/8.

The knotwork around the edge is a grommet, tied by him with a single strand to resemble a 51-part Star knot. He would later sketch the whole process for tying such a knot in two of his books,[1,2] but nimble-fingered KM readers should be able to use the following shortened instruction and tie similar grommets of any size for themselves.

Take a cord at least 13 times the circumference of your completed grommet, and tie a simple chain plait (*ABOK* #2868). Link both ends together, which adds an extra two parts or nodes, then follow the original lead around to create the characteristic Star knot shape (Stuart's figs 6 to 11 - see next page).

Finally, cut and seize, heat-seal, or otherwise secure and hide the two ends. Using a second strand of a different colour can be effective, but results in two pairs of ends which are best located on opposite sides of the finished piece.

[Note: Stuart's method can even be reduced to a knot of five nodes or points, but several YouTube videos demonstrate how to tie this directly in hand.]

Unlike the origin of most knotting lost long ago, replicating Star knots with a single strand can be dated, as Paul Harrison wrote,[3] and I know of nothing to the contrary, "This is an original knot and was developed by the writer. It has never been seen in print." He tied it directly, without having to go around a second time.

Later, in *KM* 11 (Spring 1985), Guild member Tom Solly introduced a method of tying with the aid of a jig to guide and hold the tying process.

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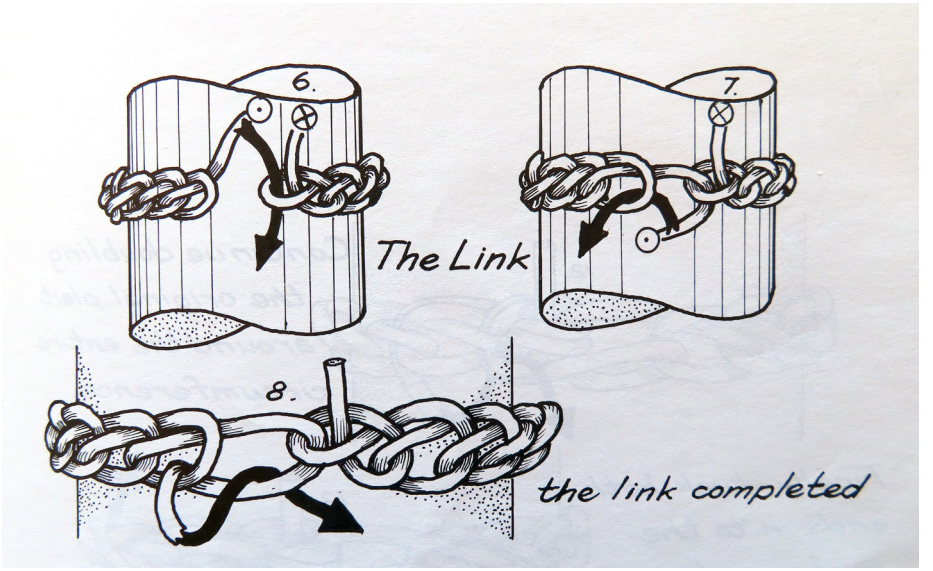
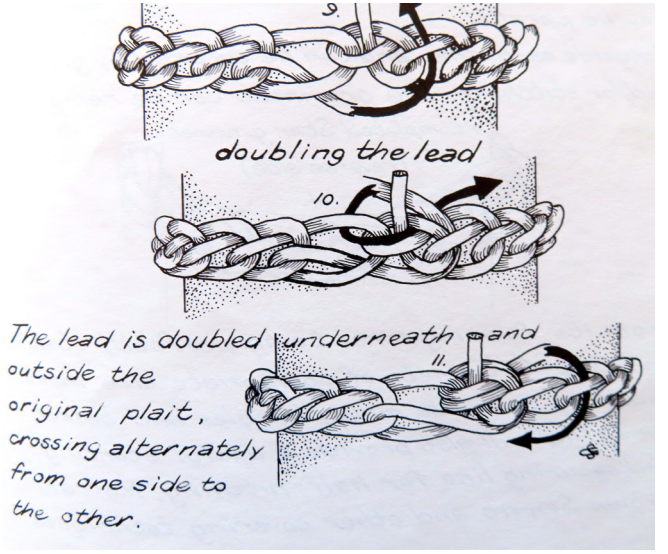
1 Grainger, Stuart. *Knotcraft* 1989, pub IGKT

2 Grainger, Stuart. *Turkshead Alternatives* 1991 pub IGKT

3 Harrison PPO, Master Mariner, *The Harrison Book of Knots*, 1964, Brown, Son & Ferguson Ltd. (Glasgow, UK)




9.
doubling the lead
10.
The lead is doubled outside the original plait, crossing alternately from one side to the other.
underneath and
11.

Committed knot tyers will no doubt want to learn the direct method as well; but Stuart's two-step approach is an easier entry into single-strand Star knot grommets, and an instructive way to familiarise yourself with the 3-dimensional structure of this original piece of decorative knotting.

International Guild of Knot Tyers Meeting 2022, Geelong.

2 – 4 September 2022

The National Wool Museum and City and Greater Geelong look forward to welcoming the International Guild of Knot Tyers Meeting 2022.

With a long history of textile and rope making it is fitting to be gathering here. From the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners 60,000-year living culture to the innovative technologies of today, Geelong is a place of coming together, sharing and co-creating. Legend has it that in a small weatherboard factory on the banks of the Barwon River here in Geelong, Michael Donaghy made by hand, with the aid of a small lad, the first commercial rope fashioned in Victoria.

We look forward to your visit and sharing all Geelong has to offer with you.

For further information e-mail nautiknotstwo@yahoo.com.au

national wool museum

CITY OF GREATER GEELONG

The organisers of the meeting invite IGKT members to submit a photo of their work to be displayed during the event. A prize will be awarded for the best photo, as judged by popular vote.

Send your photo (as jpg or similar) frankcbrown237@gmail.com

Please refer to Frank Brown's letter on p5

Butane Backsplice

by N King

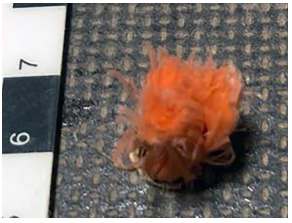
For those who, for reasons best known to themselves, need or want a reasonably tidy or consistent butane back splice, here is an idea for you to try.

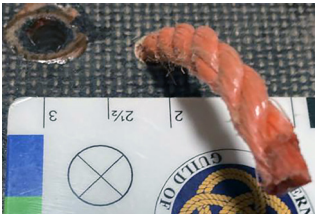
Get a piece of wood about 25mm thick, drill a small hole in it, then drill half way with the size for a tight fit to take the rope in question, (screw it in), drill right through from the other side with the same size drill-bit. This is to give a clean entry/exit. Leave 5mm or so of your rope protruding, thoroughly melt the end, wait a moment or two, then gently pull through until flush, wait a few moments more then pull out with a counter-clockwise screwing motion (for Z-laid rope), job done.

There is, of necessity, an element of empiricism in this, but you get the idea, so play around to see what suits you best. When you are happy with sizes and the timing, you can make a nice piece of wood, steel, or whatever else comes to hand. (Highly conductive materials may cool it a bit too quick though, try it.) Have a selection of holes for several sizes of rope and stick it in your pocket.

I'll make it clear that I am not a fan of this procedure, or of any requirement for it at all, but I have seen so many nasty, halfhearted, botched efforts that obviously the people who practise this method need all the help they can get, and judging by their obvious lack of knowledge I had better point out, to save them some stress and time, that it doesn't work at all well with natural rope.

This is not intended to encourage or condone the practice, but it is considered to be fractionally better than a Half, or Thumb knot in the end of a rope; even this seems to be a bit too advanced for some.





Pennine Way Hitch vs Blake's Hitch

by Owen K Nuttall

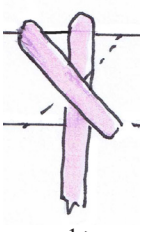
The Blake's hitch is a relatively new knot, it's only been around for about 40 years. It's a knot used mainly by arborists and cavers, for ascending and descending a climbing rope.

Unlike a Prusik knot, Blake's hitch has just one working end and in material the same thickness as the climbing rope, while the Prusik knot is tied using two working ends of a rope which are just half the thickness of the climbing rope.

The nearest I came to the Blake's hitch was the Snuggle hitch 50 years ago. It works well when tied to a spar, pull or rope and can be pulled left, right or centre but only when the Snuggle hitch is in rope just half the thickness of the climbing rope.

Around January whilst twiddling (as my wife calls it) with my climbing rope, using just a small adjustment from the Snuggle hitch, I came up with the Pennine Way hitch, when both ropes are of the same thickness. I prefer to tie with the main line in the horizontal position (this is basically a knot tied round a hitch). With a little practice it can be tied as quickly as the Blake's hitch and serves the same purpose. Remember to always finish this knot with a good stopper knot. I would appreciate a comparison test and result in a later *Knotting Matters*.

Blake's hitch



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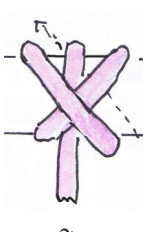

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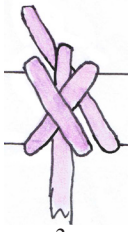

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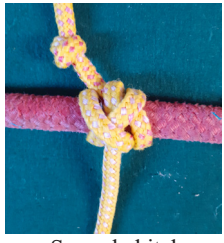
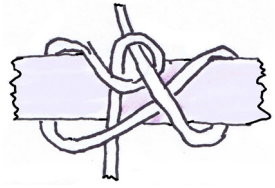
Snuggle hitch



Snuggle hitch



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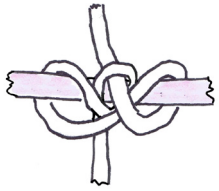


2

Pennine Way hitch

Pennine Way hitch

40th Anniversary Meeting

Coming back from the meeting in Ipswich UK, where we celebrated 40 years of the IGKT, and held the AGM, we would rather let the pictures do the talking, so this text will be VERY brief!

The program followed the usual pattern of activities, talks, displays, the raffles (including a 'super raffle'), with one day set aside for public access. The Thursday featured a memorable trip by sailing barge up and down the River Orwell.

In order to accommodate an AGM which allowed members to join via Zoom, it was held on the Friday night at 21h.00 GMT+1 and it didn't last very long.

Following a two-year lapse since our last face-to-face meeting, those present seemed to need to catch up with each other. Despite ongoing travel restraints there were six nationalities represented.

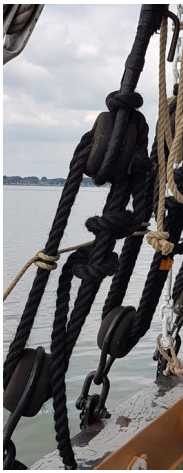
Images this page by Jane Bamford

Sheila and David Pearson receiving the President's Cup.

Liz and Des Pawson with their 'retirement' presents.

Penny Bodger holding her engraved glass plaque in acknowledgment of her status as founder member.

IPSWICH
2022



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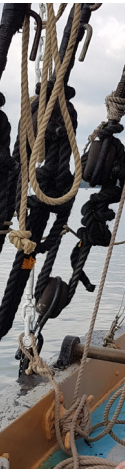
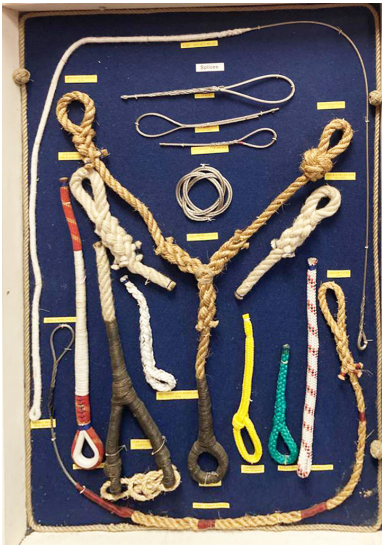
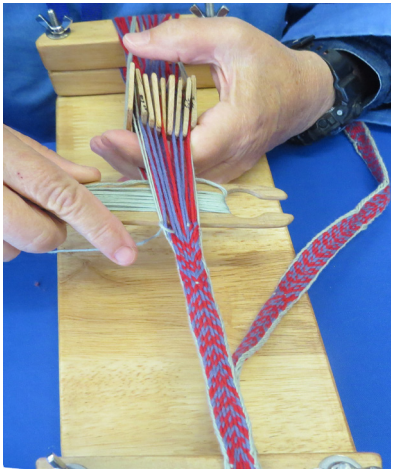
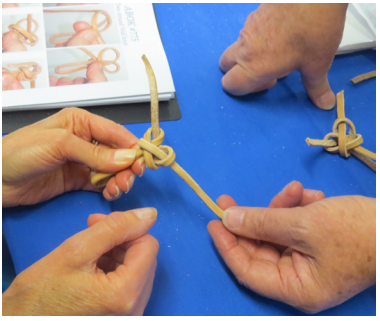








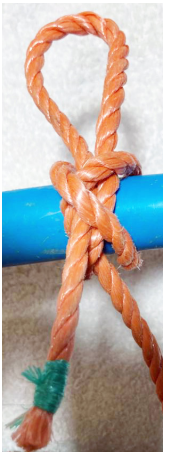
Photos on pp 22-25
Ruth Groves,
Sue Pepper,
Maurice McPartlan,
Gordon Teenan

Practical Knotting: Snippet 26

by Cazbil

When filling a container with water from a hose, the latter often has a mind of its own: here's how to restrain it. The need sometimes arises from the hose's propensity to wander round and round the said container, thereby loosening any knot you might have used to secure it. Before you know where you are, the hose is on the ground pumping out rather a lot of water where you don't want it.

So, tie the hose to a nearby fixture using a Clove Hitch and slip a bight of the working end under the first turn (from out to in) which converts it to a Slipped Constrictor*, and pull it up fairly firmly.



(To release, just pull the working end and it returns to a round turn.) This is of particular benefit during cold and frosty periods when you would much rather be somewhere else with a cup of coffee and a piece of toast (model on right).

As a nice aside, hang up the half metre of material used with a Larks Head, handy for next time.

Notice the material: whipped ends? Sorry, no, just a Half knot. The whole thing is quick, simple, cheap and effective, arrived at empirically and easily assimilated by the average horny-handed son of the soil.
I dare say someone will come up with some exotic knot that will require a PhD in topology to understand it as being a superior system, but bear in mind the old acronym KISS, 'Keep It Simple Stupid', allegedly coined by the lead engineer at Lockheed responsible for the astonishing Blackbird spy plane. OK, since you ask, or at least wonder, the opposite is KICKME, Keep It Complicated, Keep Me Employed.
A couple of points to note here, knots work because at least one of the components involved has some 'give' or 'stretch'. It is exactly the same principle with nuts and bolts. Try tying a knot with Kevlar or similar. Subject it to tremendous tension and you'll find it comes apart quite easily because of its extremely low stretch. It was thought to be going to take over the world when invented, but after a minute or two, its limitations became obvious, the lack of stretch being one of them, a bit of an Achilles' heel. The Constrictor shown only works because the hose has a bit of 'give', and the 'farmer's orange' and certainly the steel tube, has little or none. I can only describe the cost per metre of this stuff as vanishingly small, but what I can assure you is that it is very strong, vast amounts of it are manufactured annually, it litters the countryside and the agricultural industry utterly depends on it. It's non-biodegradable, and, virtually without exception, single use. 'Green'? Not as such, that's probably why it's orange. Suitable substitute string suggestions should receive sincere consideration, from, and should be directed to the manufacturers without delay.
Cazbil.
PS As a matter of interest, if you get the hose-end height right, the filling process goes quiet when the desired level is reached. This gives you a minute or two to get on with something else, like replacing any previously-whipped rope ends with tight half knots, because most domesticated animals take great delight in removing any whipping within reach.
**Editors' note: There are other methods of tying a Constrictor knot.*

Don't forget

World Knot Tying Day 18th September 2022

Write and tell us what you have planned or what you did

Rope in Japanese Ceremony[1]

by Richard Hopkins

The Japanese are renowned for many things from martial arts to motor cars, decoration to electronics, elaborate ceremonial and theatrical costumes, and in many of these disciplines knots and ropework play an important part.

Mundane tasks like wrapping a parcel are approached with finesse and the desire to present an aesthetically-pleasing package. Even gardening tasks such as erecting a trellis may be completed using Japanese lashings that look delicate but are quite secure.

Gifts and small envelopes often have decorative knots called *mizuhiki*, often made from cords of rolled and starched rice paper, to express thoughts and emotions that might be difficult to put into words (right). I am unable to explain all the hidden meanings and wishes in the knots but longevity, prosperity and fertility in various forms are frequent subjects.

Guild member Mikio Kogure has written many books showing how to tie knots in the Japanese style. The clear illustrations mean that there is no difficulty with the language. There are also videos on YouTube demonstrating Japanese knots.

The art of *hojo jutsu* was used by warriors to tie up a prisoner, and this became a skill used by the police forces of old Japan. In keeping with the requirements of their society there were different ways of securing a prisoner depending on their social status so that there would be no loss of 'face' when being marched through the city to the magistrate or jail. Cooperation of the prisoner during the tying was assured by placing a sword held by another officer at their throat.

Some of the *hojo jutsu* techniques transferred into *shibari* which involves tying someone, often a naked female, with an intricate pattern of crossing rope and is often likened to bondage with erotic undertones. This is about the only aspect of knotting not covered by Ashley.

Some styles of Samurai armour were laced together with strong silk cords braided on a *maru dai* or other equipment. It might take as many as 190m of cord for one suit of armour.

Considering the large military influence in early Japan, braid production was

1 Article originally requested for *Sac de Noeuds* (*SdN* 50, 2022) translated by J-P Durand

often an important economic factor for many villages. Silk has to be braided as it is too smooth to make a laid rope but even cord of small diameter is immensely strong when correctly braided. The many intricate patterns of braided cord can be made (right).

While talking about martial arts, the Korean *Po Bak Sul* uses a length of cord to trap strikes and to add leverage to offensive moves. This may be seen in the film *Transporter 3* when the hero Jason Statham uses first his tie and later the sleeve of his shirt in an encounter with several opponents. There are variations of this in the Philipines and China and, of course, the Japanese Ninja are well known for using a blade or a weight on the end of a rope to add reach to their attacks as well as using rope as a climbing aid.

Ropes play an important part in Shinto, one of the state religions. Called *shimenawa*, stylised ropes or cords, are used for purification and act as the dividing line between the sacred and profane or spiritual and ritually pure and earthly regions. These may be small, just a few centimetres long or massive as seen on the larger temples and shrines and any size in between (above).

They are believed to act as protection against evil spirits and may be seen in Shinto shrines, on Torii gates and even at ground-breaking ceremonies on construction sites. *Shimenawa* are also wrapped around *yorishiro*, objects such as rocks or trees thought to be capable of attracting spirits called *kami.*

The ceremonial belt of the highest rank of Sumo wrestler, the *yokozuna*, during the opening ceremony, indicates that they are living *yorishiro*. In this case it would be all the good virtuous *kami* associated with Sumo.

One fable of the origins of *shimenawa* is that the spirit Amaterasu was hiding in a cave from her brother Amano-Iwato, after an argument. Other spirits tried to entice her out, as without her the world was dull and dismal. When she emerged, one of the spirits used a magical rope to draw a line between her and the cave so that she could not go back again. That rope was *shimenawa* and the universe lit

up again. There are other less fanciful explanations.

Shimenawa are often decorated, most frequently with folded white paper that represents lightning, a symbol of fertility, but other things may be used, each with its own meaning. Not all *shimenawa* are cigar-shaped and the rope may be braided but still has the spiritual power (right).

Traditionally the ropes were made of hemp but, since 1948, rice straw has become the usual material, and nowadays synthetics cords are coming into use as the number of people with the skills to make the very large straw versions is declining. The largest *shimenawa* is at Izumo Taisha grand shrine and measures 13.5m long and 3m wide. It weighs somewhere between 5 and 8 tons requiring a crane to install it, but others can be relatively small to fit the space available.

Being of a natural fibre, it does deteriorate in Japan's often humid atmosphere and the replacement takes three months to make. The rice stems are cut at about 70 days of growth before the grains have taken all the nutrients from the stems. They are then factory-dried before grading and selection to make the *shimenawa*. The straw has to be crushed or beaten with sticks to soften it, and may need to be sprayed with water during the twisting and laying process which is much like traditional rope-making (right).

There are trees and rocks with ropes all over Japan, but one of the more unusual sites is a rock in the sea 'married' to another rock sticking out from the land in Ise Bay (left).

Not every establishment can support such large ropes but many restaurants, police stations and ships have a smaller version called a *kamidana* or household shrine which takes control of rice, salt and water (right).

This all leads us to the ceremonial belt worn by the top rank of sumo wrestlers.

Sumo is a full contact form of wrestling that may be traced back to fights put on for entertainment in the court, although there are more fanciful stories involving spirts competing for possession of the islands.

Regular events at the Emperor's court formalised the rules and religious ceremonies that are part of the present competitions. It became a popular sport and often *daimyo*, the war lords, would sponsor a fighter or a 'stable' of them.

Odo Nobunaga arranged a tournament with 1,500 fighters. With several fights going on simultaneously, circular areas were set up to control and speed up the action. This also helped to keep the audience safe. This was the origin of the *dohyo* that developed into the form we see in tournaments today. The winner was presented with a bow and did a ritual dance to show the warlord his gratitude.

The sport became popular but was eventually banned for a while because of wild fighting in the streets. By the time of the Meiji restoration in 1868, Sumo was recognised and became a symbol of nationalistic pride.

Although the rules are basically simple there are 83 techniques that can cause one of the contestants to touch the floor with any part of his body other than the soles of his feet or be forced out of the ring. A bout often only lasts for a few seconds but is limited to four minutes. Should this not result in a win a rematch is held immediately and this usually does produce a result. If there is still no decision, the judges may order a further rematch.

There are restrictions on certain actions often seen in less civilised fights, but size is a major factor. There are no weight divisions as in boxing, although members from the same 'stable' are not allowed to fight one another. The heaviest Sumo wrestler was Konishiki Yasokichi who weighed 287kg and had the nickname 'The Dump Truck'. The difference in weight between fighters can be as much as 100kg but technique is also important and in a televised bout during 2020, a 92kg wrestler beat one of 194kg.

Although size is important, skill and tactics play an important role, but minor

injuries, especially during training, are not uncommon. Type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure are common problems and the life expectancy of 60-65 is about 10 years less than the general Japanese population.

Sumo wrestlers have to wear traditional clothing at all times when not in the ring and are prohibited from driving a car, most being too big to fit in a car anyway. They are usually transported in a minibus.

There is a strict ranking-system based on professional merit, but here we are only interested in the very top level the *yokozuna*. Promotion to this grade by the governing body is very strict and requires an impressive record over several tournaments with a high level of performance and dignity and grace throughout their career. Only two wrestlers can hold the title at any one time although there is only one active at present.

Yokozuna means horizontal rope and refers to the ceremonial belt of hemp rope worn on entry to the ring and for the opening and closing ceremonies of the tournament. It can weigh around 20kg and is usually made completely from scratch by the champion's stablemates taking great care not to get it dirty (below)

From the time the rank was created, until 2020 there have only been 72 holders of the title, although formal record keeping only began in 1789. The 73rd, *Terunofuji*, was promoted after the July 2021 tournament.

The rope belt or *tsuna* is similar to a *shimenawa* making the *yokozuna* into a conduit for the spirits bringing good luck and victory to the tournament and is tied at the back with either one or two loops of rope. It will also be decorated with folded paper streamers called *shide* in the same way that *shimenawa* are (right).

For competition he will wear the standard belt-cum-loincloth called a *mawashi* which provides a grip for the opponents during the fight. This might be 10m long and is never washed as that would weaken the fabric. Instead the *mawashi* are hung up to air for a couple of days between uses. It is tied at the rear and should this become loose during combat, the umpire will halt the bout to re-tie it before the round restarts. Some wrestlers deliberately leave the *mawashi* a little loose to make it harder to give a secure hand-hold, while others soak it in water to prevent the opponent from getting a firm grip.

The same style was used as a bathing costume for youngsters as they could be lifted out of the water by the back of the belt if they got into difficulty.

Preceding the *yokozuna* into the ring is a dew sweeper with a broom and he is followed by a sword-bearer. The champion then carries out his ceremonial dance following one of two traditional forms attributed to the 10th *yokozuna*, Unryu Kyukuchi, and the 11th, Shiranui Koemon, although there is no proof that either actually performed the ceremony in this way. If he uses the *Unryu* ritual, his tsuna will have one large loop as the back whereas if he does the *Shiranui* version there will be two loops. The *yokozuna* chooses a style on promotion and keeps that throughout his subsequent career.

In the *Shiranui* style, the arms are held out more to the side and it is considered to be an attacking style while the *Unryu* dance has both attack and defensive elements (right).

I was not able to find a picture that showed the loops clearly at the same time as the different arm positions as they look similar at the start of the dance.

The Japanese television station NHK shows highlights, with English commentary, of the top division tournaments which go on for fifteen days every two months. I believe they also broadcast with commentary in other languages and Sumo has a following in many countries.

I hope that you will find this of interest but I am sure that I have missed several details about knots and rope in Japan so crave forgiveness.

Pan Changs and Embellishments

by Europa Chang Dawson

All, customs, the good as well as the bad, only make sense when people understand the intentions behind them. Otherwise, the traditions dwindle into superstition – and commercialism takes over. The same can be said of Chinese knots: there must be space for the knotters to tie their own interpretations.

So far, all the knots have been demonstrated almost as if they are a set of theorems in an old-fashioned geometry textbook – until these are applied to an exercise, the formal layout and insistence on structured method appear to be no more than Euclid's foibles.

It is, of course, perfectly possible to tie only 'textbook' knots (and tie them with speed and accuracy) but it does rather limit the potential for expressing yourself if your intention is to tie a series of good wishes for individuals in different situations. What's more, it may be embarrassing if two recipients decide to compare their strings of wishes!

Now that you are familiar with some of the possibilities of the PC knots in amulets, this article will suggest some ways of making your pieces individual to you.

In general, any string of good wishes will include at least one PC of some description.

In the photo sequence of the 'Strawberry' knot, the PCs are 1x1, with the Carrick knots in the interlaced bights being much more prominent.

The whole has been put together to display a 'carved ivory' (in reality a plastic, moulded and stamped) bead. Frequently, a carved piece of bone or semi-precious stone would be displayed in this way. For the tying sequence, there is a 1x1 PC set between two Matthew Walkers; the side bights of the PC are LONG, and the MWs help to consolidate the PC.

If the (extended) Carrick knots are tied, it is important to twist the side-bight loops mirror-wise to make the knot sit better.

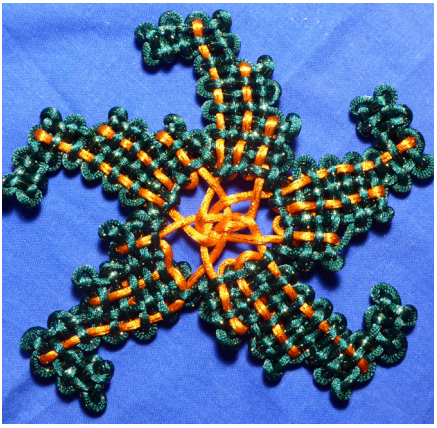
After the bead has been held in place by another MW the Carrick knots are completed before the second 1x1 PC is tied, and then a fourth MW completes the sequence.

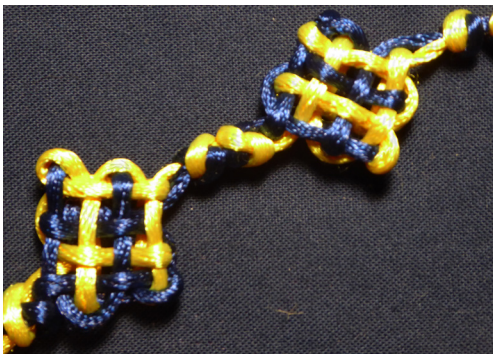
Perhaps it should be noted here that, though the Chinese name of the two-strand MW is given as 'Double Connection' knot, a less 'googlified' translation would give 'twinned' or 'symmetrical' for 'double' and 'linkage' instead of 'connection' – so that we have a 'symmetrical bend' which is a more familiar description.

[I have used the Korean name of 'Strawberry' knot as the only Chinese name I know for this is 'Framing' knot. However, I am not certain if the Strawberry knot carries a bead or has another knot tied in the central position where a bead would sit – a two-strand Diamond knot would sit perfectly, and the tightening up would be much easier.]

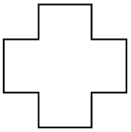
A variation is demonstrated to show how a larger bead with a smaller central channel down the bead is wide enough to accommodate the doubled cord.

With modern dyestuffs, colour choices may also be personal. At the time *The Dream of the Red Chamber* was written, aniline dyes had not been discovered, so that only certain colours were available in silk cord. Also (though I do not know enough about dyestuffs to be certain of which) certain colours placed contiguously could leach into each other, and so they were not tied together. Using colours in PCs may produce stripes or spots.





The ladybird design (ladybirds being considered lucky in the Occident) is an octagonal PC with three sides in red and the fourth one in white. [This made for clearer photos; I do know that ladybirds have black spots.]



Finally, if you feel like something challenging, try knotting a 2x2 PC through another 2x2 PC, on the diagonal. The two planes are stepped, so will NOT meet exactly at the corners.

Members interested in attending this festival, please contact Mikko Snellman as soon as possible info@snellman.ax

Visit to Chatham Historic Dockyard

by Maurice McPartlan

A fortuitous message from CG Johnston – many thanks CG! - reminded me that some of Liz and Des Pawson's collection, donated to Chatham Historic Dockyard had gone on show in a former heckling shed[1] at the Ropery. Galvanised by this reminder, my brother and I revived our plan to visit Chatham, which had been on hold since the outbreak of Covid.

My focus was on getting to the rope shed and visiting The Age of Rope exhibition in the old heckling shed transformed into a new display for the Pawson collection, among other things. But as with eating dessert, one often keeps the best bits to last! As the ropemaking was scheduled for 1215 hrs we visited the Hearts of Oak exhibition first. I was most taken by the illustrations of how the natural shapes of trees were integrated into the construction of boats, and by the Mould Loft. I really learned a lot! At the end of the exhibition, we came face to face with the 5-ton model of HMS Victory, built for the 1941 film *That Hamilton Woman* and capable of firing a broadside!

It was also very impressive to see the old timbers from HMS Namur, a 2nd rate 90-gun ship-of-the-line launched in 1756. 25% of the frames were found, in 1995, under the old wheelwright's shop.

While waiting for the magic of the ropemaking, we had a first quick visit to the heckling shed and, while the first impression was of a beautifully laid-out and presented collection, given the number of objects listed as 'PAW', I was disappointed not to see some sort of acknowledgment of the Pawsons as the donors.

It is also clear that what is on display is only about one tenth of the collection. You can find the details of the Des and Liz Pawson collection catalogue online at https://tinyurl.com/24eu9yr8

1 'Heckling' also 'hackling' see p12

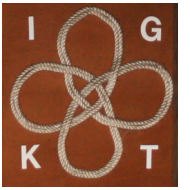
It should be noted that the collection is not yet fully catalogued.

Tucked into the collection of rope samples is a piece of Sugar Date Palm rope donated to Des and Liz's collection by *KM*'s very own Gordon Teenan.

I wonder what extra space will be needed to house more of the collection once it is catalogued and preserved. I would happily go back, even before that happens.

Into the ropewalk and the most impressive aspect, on reflection, apart from the speed the top disappears down the ropewalk, are the ergonomics of the ropemaking process. Once the rope was made, the end was tied off at the crank head and cut off the hooks. This was then introduced onto a line-winder, which, as it spooled the rope, dragged the sledge back up the runway, so that it was ready for the next rope-making exercise. Just as well, I wouldn't fancy having to push it back!

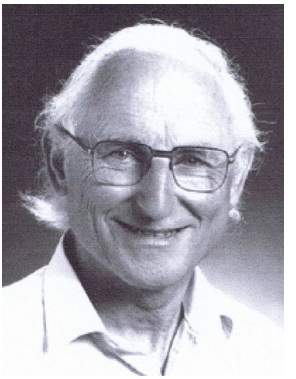
After the demonstration we crossed over into the man-made fibre rope shed and walking down the workshop to a demonstration area containing a beautifully-made wooden hand-cranked rope-making machine, I noticed a TH on the wall surrounded by IGKT. and so went back to ask one of the ropemakers where it had come from and was told that it had been put there by Fred Cordier, MBE[2] many years ago. Does anyone know why?



2 Fred Cordier was the last Master Ropemaker at Chatham. All of the present Master Ropemakers 'served their Apprenticeship' under him though there is no longer a recognised diploma.

OBITUARY

John Christopher Turner
1928-2022



Dr John Turner ("Please call me John"), Honorary Fellow of Waikato University, Hamilton, New Zealand, died on 3rd March 2022.

He was 93½, and latterly had suffered from what he described as "an inconvenient disorder" that had involved blood transfusions at increasingly frequent intervals. His mind was lively and active to the end.

John was born in Goole, West Yorkshire, England, on 1st October 1928 and had worked as a lecturer at Leeds Polytech (now University) until he joined Waikato University in 1970. At Waikato he rose to become the first Dean of Computing and Mathematical Sciences – and the methods and systems he piloted as Foundation Dean soon led to other universities following Waikato's lead. It is an indication of the high esteem in which he was held that the university flew their flag at half-mast between John's death and his funeral.

Outside academia, John's interests and enthusiasms were wide-ranging and taken to a high level, from hang-gliding (he founded the NZ Hang-Gliding Club) to music (he played four instruments) via bridge, crosswords and juggling, to name but a few.

For members of IGKT, John Turner and Georg Schaake will invariably be 'The Turks Head Twins'. Although John always emphasized that it was Georg who had tied the Turks Heads, it was John (according to Georg) who first spotted the Lead-Bight relationship of the 'promoted' THs with the numbers of the Fibonacci sequence. This, and John's gentle persistence, resulted in their observations being written up and published as a series of books on THs.

A further consequence of John's interest in knots was that his enthusiasm persuaded Vaughan Jones (of the Knot Polynomial, and one of our honorary vice-presidents) to take an interest in our Guild.

On one of his trips to Britain, John spent an afternoon at a meeting of the (now defunct) Essex branch, at Pitsea.

JT and Vaughan Jones

It was entirely characteristic of the man's generosity and modesty that afterwards John commented how he had felt "totally out-ranked" by everyone's ability to tie the knots more smoothly than he had.

Although John allowed his membership of IGKT to lapse some years ago, he retained a lively interest in the activities of IGKT and kept in touch with those privileged members whom he considered as friends. He will be greatly missed.

Europa Chang Dawson

"Knots are more numerous than the stars; and equally mysterious and beautiful" John Turner, 1988

Nobody's course through life is predictable, although hindsight permits one to explain the paths taken, such as the happy coincidence of meeting and sharing ideas with remarkable people. The collaborative editorship in the *History and Science of Knots* (*HSOK*) with John Turner was such an episode. Allow me to reflect on my experiences from those days to celebrate the memory of John. It is difficult to avoid any commemorative from sounding like a chronology of events, but I want to present a development of ideas to arrive at an appreciation of John's contribution to the knot-tying community and his impact on the science of knots.

John was a scholar and knew well that the battle of ideas in the academic world cannot be better expressed than by its credo to 'publish or perish'. This is remarkable in two ways. First, history tends to be kind to whoever writes it. Second, actual history and books about history are quite distinct. If his long list of publications does not support those views, then it certainly evidences that John was an excellent editor. Several sources address the scientific accomplishments scattered throughout his life. In the newsletter of the New Zealand Mathematical Society, Kevin Broughan describes how John acquired his PhD rather late in academic life, but his tenacity eventually got him on the 'right side of the track'. Not that a deferred doctorate holds significance, but at one point John himself was thinking of modestly calling his autobiography "Memoirs of a Minor Mathematician" as he stated on his weblog.

Next to recorded academic achievements John demonstrated hands-on leadership across the spectrum of tertiary education. He was most effective when acting in an informal setting.

Like the time he persuaded Fields Medal winner, Vaughan Jones, to join the IGKT and later proposed the Guild made him an honorary vice-president.

Although John produced most of his work in the mathematical domain, he encountered knots when the famous Jones Polynomial erupted onto the knot-topological stage in 1982. A few years later, Georg Schaake and John crossed paths in their hometown, Hamilton.

This was a remarkable coincidence as John's field of topological knot theory is a far cry from the braiding artisan, practitioner's domain that Georg Schaake represented. The foundations of decorative knotting were given a boost as never before. John's previous work in Fibonacci Sequences turned out to be well-suited to the capture of the cumulative information in expanding cylindrical braids, by means of the Regular Knot Tree and Mobius Turks Heads. John used his contacts at Waikato University to publish the first fruits of their collaboration in 1988.

I met John when he was close to retirement. Together with Georg Schaake he had picked up on the most ambitious braiding-knowledge project the world had ever witnessed. Their work was truly radicalizing the field and not merely making cosmetic changes to, or extending, decorative knotting. It was aimed at two objectives.

First, to present a sound underpinning of mathematical principles of braided knots as suggested in the literature but left unproven. Clifford Ashley's practical and decorative marlinspike seamanship and Bruce Grant's braided leatherwork worlds were united by a formal foundation, with knots emerging as solutions to Diophantine Equations. These nuggets of learning predominantly benefitted braiding practitioners.

Second, to use the model to automate braiding techniques, ie use computers to further the art of braiding. As I had been doing some computer programming for my 1986 Knotting Extravaganza, I was curious about the people behind this publication and contacted John. It turned out that he was fond of traveling and it was not long before we met in Rotterdam during the 1990 half-yearly meeting - organised by Jan Vos. The long weekend offered ample opportunity to discuss knots and more.

John gave an impromptu presentation on how his braiding adventures were proceeding. During the visit to the Batavia Museum in Lelystad, traditional seamanship contrasted wildly with talks about Regular Knot Trees. Those were not the only memories that became anchored in John's mind, however. One encounter that vividly made it into his recollection for the rest of his life occurred after the traditional Knotters' Dinner in Katendrecht, when a scantily-clad young lady bumped into him!

Anyway, although the idea of writing about cultural, historical and scientific aspects of knots was born in that Dutch harbour town, it was not until 1993 when I established contacts with Lou Kauffman at the University of Illinois, Chicago who represented the World Scientific publishing house in Singapore. From now on our nascent ideas were growing more serious.

John was easy-going and pulled in many people to contribute to the project that was to become the *HSOK*. His many acquaintances and correspondents produced a veritable community of quite diverse knot authors. Georg Schaake did not aspire to write a chapter, but Charles Warner had been very keen to be a co-editor for some time.

As *HSOK* developed, I visited John and his wife Barbara in their beautiful house along Hardley Street, Hamilton in 1995. John had written a provocative self-referential chapter on theories of knots. By reflecting inward, to study the subject itself, it truly covers the science of knots: science being developed to further knotting. John chose to speak about Ashley's, Grant's, Warner's, and Schaake's influences on the fields of knots, a remarkable combination. Practical knotters at one extreme and braiding artisans at the other. John bridged the gap between decorative knots and real-life practical knots by laying bare the role of knowledge.

The subject of knot knowledge management did not end with John's *HSOK* chapter. As books are the keepers of their author's legacy it is better still if there are references to these works. In fact, very recently Paulo Santos picked up the evolution of knot knowledge in the artificial intelligence domain (2021).

To John, knots constituted an infinite field to explore. His famous remark on the number of knots exceeding that of the stars and being equally beautiful and mysterious is often quoted. Personally, I doubt the world of knots will ever stop expanding. New chapters to the history and science of knots will be added, just as new stars and galaxies are discovered every day.

The Dutch computer scientist Edsger W. Dijkstra once remarked that the role of the computer in computer science should be likened to that of the telescope in astronomy. As knots numerically outnumber stars, I suspect John experienced a similar awe about knots while on his track throughout the universe.

Pieter van der Griend

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All branch details as on IGKT website on 23/5/22

back cover: Sailing barge on the River Orwell Photo:Ruth Groves

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